



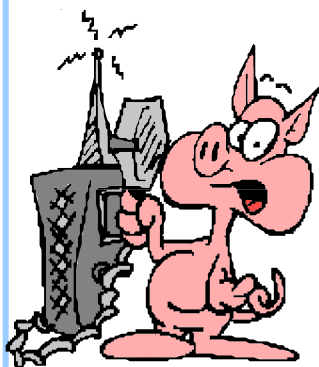
# AUTUMN

## "Ham"ing it up

**Joe Goudswaard**

**T**he radar screen starts to light up across Arkansas...severe weather is imminent once again. While the National Weather Service uses many high tech devices to issue watches and warnings across the state...we still rely on one of our most dedicated and reliable resources, the amateur radio operator.

Amateur radio has been, and always will be, a vital link in the NWS warning system. The Little Rock National Weather Service office is fortunate to work very closely with many highly trained amateur radio operators or "HAMS" across our state. It is the desire of the National Weather Service to utilize to the fullest possible extent all the technologies that amateur radio has to offer. These volunteers will come into our office at a moment's notice. They support their



local communities and government by providing the NWS with timely and accurate severe weather reports. Numerous severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings have been issued based on the reports of these dedicated people. They provide the NWS with these severe weather reports via amateur

radio. This includes both incoming reports of severe weather and amateur radio operators making observations at specific locations in response to a NWS request. They, along with all spotters, act as the eyes and ears of the weather service out in the field.

Amateur radio is also used as an organized communication network for passing critical severe weather traffic in a timely fashion to and from the

NWS in the event that normal communications are somehow interrupted. NWS offices have lost normal communications in the past. When that occurs, an Amateur Radio Net is activated in order to get the word out.

The Amateur Radio Station and all equipment is either donated by public-service minded amateurs or has been purchased by the National Weather Service. All equipment is maintained by amateur radio operators volunteering their time and expertise. The close working relationship between the NWS and amateur radio operators provides many special benefits to each group.



Every attempt is made to disseminate all statements and warnings issued by the NWS over the air waves to keep amateurs radio operators informed of developing situations and to practice for situations when normal communications channels fail. The ham radio



operators also train and organize other amateur radio operators to prepare themselves and their families for disaster or emergency weather-related situations so that they may

be available to assist in emergency net operations. This preparedness training is critical if this system is to be expected to operate reliably during true emergency situations. Everyone at the NWS thanks you for your devotion and dedication in helping us fulfill our mission.